



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

BX

1405

.A5

1885

STORAGE

B

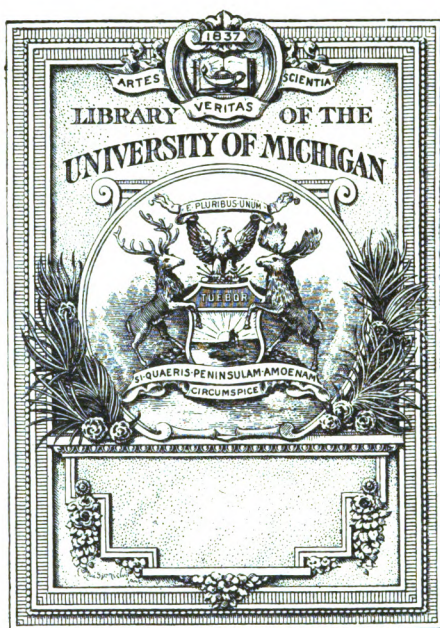
402686

DUPL

282

Plenary
Council of Baltimore
Pastoral letter

University of Michigan.



BX
1405
A5
1885

Blanch

Catholic Church in the U. S. Bishops.

PASTORAL LETTER

108823

— OF THE —

Archbishops and Bishops of the United States

— ASSEMBLED IN THE —

THIRD PLENARY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,

— TO THE —

CLERGY AND LAITY OF THEIR CHARGE.



BALTIMORE:
THE BALTIMORE PUBLISHING COMPANY,

No. 174 West Baltimore Street.

1885.





PASTORAL LETTER

— OF THE —

ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES

— ASSEMBLED IN THE —

THIRD PLENARY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,

TO THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF THEIR CHARGE.

The Archbishops and Bishops of the United States, in Third Plenary Council assembled, to their clergy and faithful people—"Grace unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

VENERABLE BRETHREN OF THE CLERGY,

BELOVED CHILDREN OF THE LAITY:

Full eighteen years have elapsed since our predecessors were assembled in Plenary Council to promote uniformity of discipline, to provide for the exigencies of the day, to devise new means for the maintenance and diffusion of our holy religion, which should be adequate to the great increase of the Catholic population. In the interval, the prelates, clergy and faithful have been taught by a wholesome experience to appreciate the zeal, piety and prudence that inspired the decrees of those venerable Fathers and to listen with cheerful submission to their authoritative voice, whether uttered in warning, in exhortation or positive enactment. And the whole American Church deeply feels and cordially proclaims her

(1)

gratitude for the treasure bequeathed to us by their wise and timely legislation. Its framers, in great part, have gone before us with the sign of Faith and now sleep the sleep of peace. But their work, after following them (Apoc.) to the dread tribunal of the great Judge to plead in their behalf and insure their reward, has remained upon earth a safe-guide and rich blessing for the clergy and people of their generation.

Since that time, however, the body of our clergy and religious has grown to wonderful dimensions, our Catholic institutions have been multiplied tenfold, with a corresponding increase in the number of our faithful laity. The territory, likewise, over which they are spread, has been greatly enlarged. The land of the far West, that was once desolate and impassable, through God's providential mercy, now rejoices and flourishes like the lily. Under His guiding hand, it has been taught to bud forth and blossom and rejoice with joy and praise. The wilderness has exchanged its solitude for the hum of busy life and industry; and the steps of our missionaries and Catholic settlers have invariably either preceded or accompanied the westward progress of civilization. Forests have given away to cities, where Catholic temples re-echo the praises of the Most High, where the priceless perfume of the "Clean Oblation," foretold by Malachi, daily ascends to heaven, and where the life-giving sacraments of Holy Church are dispensed by a devoted clergy. In view of this great progress of our holy religion, this marvellous widening of the tabernacles of Jacob, it has been judged wise and expedient, if not absolutely necessary, to examine anew the legislation of our predecessors, not with any purpose of radical change, much less of abrogation, but to preserve and perfect its spirit by adapting it to our altered circumstances. And as every day gives birth to new errors, and lapse of time or distance of place allows abuses to gradually creep into regular discipline, we have judged it the duty of our pastoral office to check the latter by recalling and enforcing established law, and to guard our flock against the former by timely words of paternal admonition.

Such, too, has been the expressed wish and injunction of our Holy Father Leo XIII, happily reigning, to whom, as Supreme Pontiff and successor of the Prince of the Apostles, by inherent right belongs the power of convoking this our Third National or Plenary Council, and of appointing (as he has graciously done) an Apostolic Delegate to preside over its deliberations.

One of the most important events that our age has witnessed was the assembling by Pius IX, of happy memory, of the General Council of the Vatican. It was held three years after the close of our Second Plenary

Council, and all, or nearly all, of its members, and many besides of the prelates now assembled in this Third Plenary Council, enjoyed the rare privilege of sitting with the other Princes of the Church in the only Ecu-
menical Synod vouchsafed these latter ages. Its appointed task was to condemn the most influential and insidious errors of the day, and to complete the legislation on weighty matters of discipline that had been contemplated and discussed, but left undecided, by the Council of Trent. Like its predecessor, the Council of the Vatican was interrupted by the disturbed condition of Europe; and the Fathers, leaving the work of their deliberations unfinished, returned to their homes, some to this Western continent, others to remote regions of the East. But we would fain cherish the hope, and lift up to heaven our earnest prayer, that the Father of mercies and God of all consolation, who is ever ready to comfort His Church in all her tribulations, who holds in His hand the counsels of princes and the devices of peoples, may deign, in His own good time, to reunite the prelates, or their successors, over the tomb of St. Peter or elsewhere, as may seem best to His infinite wisdom. The Vatican Council, however, during its short session of seven months, gave solemn, authoritative utterance to some great truths which the Church had unvaryingly held from the days of Christ and His Apostles; but which she found it once more necessary to recall and inculcate against the widespread skepticism and unbelief of our day. Besides condemning the philosophy, no less wicked than false and teeming with contradictions, of the last two centuries, and especially of our own times, she had to uphold (such is the lamentable downward course of those who rebelled against her divine commission to teach all nations!) the truth and divinity of the Sacred Books against the very children of those, who once appealed to Scripture to disprove her teachings, and to maintain the dignity and value of human reason against the lineal descendants of those, who once claimed reason as the supreme and only guide in picking out from her creed what mysteries they would retain, what mysteries they would reject. Nobly did she perform her duty and assert in the face of a forgetful or unbelieving world that reason is God's highest and best gift to man in the natural order, and that this most salutary aid of his weakness is not only not impaired, but strengthened, supplemented and ennobled by the supernatural gift of Divine revelation.

We have no reason to fear that you, beloved brethren, are likely to be carried away by these or other false doctrines condemned by the Vatican Council, such as materialism or the denial of God's power to create, to reveal to mankind His hidden truths, to display by miracles His almighty power in this world which is the work of His hands. But neither can we

close our eyes to the fact that teachers of skepticism and irreligion are at work in our country. They have crept into the leading educational institutions of our non-Catholic fellow-citizens, they have (though rarely) made their appearance in the public press and even in the pulpit. Could we rely fully on the innate good sense of the American people and on that habitual reverence for God and religion which has so far been their just pride and glory, there might seem comparatively little danger of the general diffusion of those wild theories which reject or ignore Revelation, undermine morality, and end not unfrequently by banishing God from His own creation. But when we take into account the daily signs of growing unbelief, and see how its heralds not only seek to mould the youthful mind in our colleges and seats of learning, but are also actively working amongst the masses, we cannot but shudder at the dangers that threaten us in the future. When to this we add the rapid growth of that false civilization which hides its foulness under the name of enlightenment—involving, as it does, the undisguised worship of mammon, the anxious search after every ease, comfort and luxury for man's physical well-being, the all-absorbing desire to promote his material interests, the unconcern or rather contempt for those of his higher and better nature—we cannot but feel that out of all this must grow a heartless materialism, which is the best soil to receive the seeds of unbelief and irreligion, which threaten to desolate the country at no distant day. The first thing to perish will be our liberties. For men, who know not God or religion, can never respect the inalienable rights which man has received from His Creator. The State in such case must become a despotism, whether its power be lodged in the hands of one or many.

To you, beloved brethren, who possess the treasure of Catholic faith, we may safely address the reiterated injunctions of the Lord to the chosen leader of His people.

"Take courage and be strong . . . take courage and be very valiant. . . . Behold I command thee, take courage and be strong. Fear not and be not dismayed, because the Lord thy God is with thee."¹ The latter clause gives the reason why we should take courage and be strong. An intermediate verse gives the means of securing God's assistance: "Let not the book of this law depart from thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate on it day and night, that thou mayest observe and do the things that are written in it." Keep, then, day and night, before your eyes the Law of God and His teachings through that Holy Church that He has appointed mother and mistress of all men. Fly the reading of all infidel books, and keep them from your children, as you would the poison of asp or basilisk.

¹ Josue, i, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Teach them that you and they, in listening to Hely Church, have the guidance of Him who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Let others doubt or deny, but with the Apostle, you know whom you have believed, and you are certain that He will make good the trust you have reposed in Him.¹

Christ our Lord commissioned His Apostles to teach mankind the truths they had been taught by Him. They received no commandment to write on any doctrine, much less to draw up a body of articles of faith such as our children now learn from the catechism. They preached and taught by word of mouth; or, when occasion offered itself, they wrote as the Divine Spirit prompted them. What they wrote and what they delivered by oral instruction are equally God's Word. And this two-fold Word, written and unwritten, is the Deposit of divine truth, committed to the keeping of the Catholic Church, and chiefly to him on whom the Church was built—the only Apostle who, in the full sense of the words, yet lives and rules in the person of his successors, and from his unfailing chair imparts to all who seek it the truth of Christian faith.² It is his office to confirm his brethren, and the history of the Church exhibits him, from the beginning and through all ages, as faithfully fulfilling the charge entrusted to him by his Master.³ From the earliest ages down to our own, the voice of Peter has been foremost in condemning all deviations from apostolic doctrine. No threats of worldly power could subdue or silence that voice. To such threats Peter, through his successors, has ever given the same answer that he gave at Jerusalem to the assembled priests and ancients.⁴ No pleading of princes and potentates could ever win Rome's sympathy for error; no heresy under false semblance of Catholic truth ever yet eluded her vigilant eye.⁵ As soon as any novelty appeared, all hearts and eyes were turned towards the Chair of Peter, and when that Chair gave its decision, the Christian people yielded obedience. Those who would not were cut off from the communion of the Church, and became thenceforth as the heathen and the publican.

This doctrine, therefore, which had so thoroughly wrought itself into the life and action of the Church, the Vatican Council deemed proper to consecrate by a solemn definition. Hence, that no one in future may craftily pretend not to know, how and whence to ascertain what the Church officially teaches; above all, that no one may henceforth scatter the baneful seeds of false doctrine with impunity, under the mask of an appeal from the judgment of the Holy See (whether it be to learned universities,

¹ II. Tim., i, 12.

² See Epist. S. Petri Chrysologi inter Epp. S. Leonis M.

³ Cf. St. Cyprian. Ep. lix.

⁴ Luke, xii, 32.

⁵ Acts, iv, 19-20.

or State tribunals, or future councils, particular or general, as was done by Luther and the Jansenists), the Church of the living God, through the Fathers of the Vatican Council, has unequivocally declared that her authentic spokesman is the successor of St. Peter in the Apostolic See of Rome, and that what he, as Head of the Church, officially decides is part of the Deposit of Faith intrusted to her keeping by Christ Our Lord, and hence subject to neither denial, doubt nor revision, but to be implicitly received and believed by all.

In this authoritative declaration there is nothing new, nothing to give cause for wonder. It is only setting the solemn seal of definition upon what has always been the belief and practice of the Church. Yet "the gates of Hell," the powers of darkness that forever assail the Church built on Peter—though knowing (for the very devils believe and tremble in believing)¹ that they cannot prevail against it nor make void God's promise²—seem to have been stirred to their very depths by the proclamation of this great truth. And their impotent rage has found its echo upon earth. The definition evoked a storm of fierce obloquy and reckless vituperation, such as has been seldom witnessed amongst our opponents. And a wretched handful of apostate Catholics "went out from us, but they were not of us."³

But, what was far more serious, the kings of the earth stood up and the princes assembled together against the Lord⁴ and against His anointed Vicar, because of the definition. They revived the old war-cry raised by the Jews against our Saviour⁵ and so often renewed by the persecutors of the Church. They pretended that by defining the infallibility of St. Peter's successor, she had made herself the enemy of Cæsar. Herein we see plainly verified the strong language of Scripture: "Iniquity hath lied to itself."⁶ The Pope, even after the proclamation of his infallibility, is no more the enemy of Cæsar and of human governments, than was the infallible Peter the enemy of Nero, or Christ our Lord, who is infallible truth itself, the enemy of Augustus and Tiberius under whom He was born into the world, taught and suffered. The governments by which, three centuries ago, the new tenets of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin had been imposed on reluctant peoples by the sword, were the first, indeed the only ones, to again unsheathe it against Catholic believers, and especially against the bishops and clergy. It was their purpose to exterminate by degrees the Catholic hierarchy, and replace it by a servile priesthood that would subordinate its preaching and ministry to the will of the State. To do this

¹ Credunt et contremiscunt, James ii, 19.

² Matth., xvi, 18.

³ John, ii, 19.

⁴ Acts, iv, 26.

⁵ John, xix, 12, 15.

⁶ Ps., xxvi, 19.

they had to trample on solemn treaties and organic laws. But the Catholics of Prussia, clergy and people, while proving themselves most devoted and faithful to their country's laws, stood up like a wall of adamant against the tyranny of its rulers. With generous vigor and admirable constancy, they availed themselves of every legal and constitutional means to check the advances of despotism and save their own freedom and that of their country. They have given to the world a glorious example, which it is to be hoped the victims of tyrannous Liberalism in Catholic countries may some day have the wisdom or the courage to imitate. The struggle has now lasted fourteen years; but the very friends of this persecuting legislation have been driven at last to acknowledge that it has proved to be a miserable failure; and no better proof of it could be found than the fact, that the rulers of Prussia have had to fall back on the patriotism of the Catholic body to stay the threatening march of socialism and revolution. In Switzerland, too, the persecution has yielded to the policy of mildness and conciliation adopted by Our Holy Father, Leo XIII.

Beloved brethren, we have no need to encourage you to hold steadfastly to this doctrine of the Vatican Council; for you were trained from infancy to believe it, as were your fathers before you, while it was not yet invested with the formalities of a definition, just as the early Christians held firmly to the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost three hundred years before the Church found it necessary to define them in the Councils of Nice and Byzantium.

And in our own country, writers and speakers who know the Church only by the caricatures drawn by prejudice, have occasionally re-echoed the same charge; but despite local and temporary excitements, the good sense of the American people has always prevailed against the calumny. We think we can claim to be acquainted both with the laws, institutions and spirit of the Catholic Church, and with the laws, institutions and spirit of our country; and we emphatically declare that there is no antagonism between them. A Catholic finds himself at home in the United States; for the influence of his Church has constantly been exercised in behalf of individual rights and popular liberties. And the right-minded American nowhere finds himself more at home than in the Catholic Church, for nowhere else can he breathe more freely that atmosphere of Divine truth, which alone can make him free.¹

We repudiate with equal earnestness the assertion that we need to lay aside any of our devotedness to our Church, to be true Americans; the insinuation that we need to abate any of our love for our

¹ John, viii, 32.

country's principles and institutions, to be faithful Catholics. To argue that the Catholic Church is hostile to our great Republic, because she teaches that "there is no power but from God;"¹ because, therefore, back of the events which led to the formation of the Republic, she sees the Providence of God leading to that issue, and back of our country's laws the authority of God as their sanction,—this is evidently so illogical and contradictory an accusation, that we are astonished to hear it advanced by persons of ordinary intelligence. We believe that our country's heroes were the instruments of the God of Nations in establishing this home of freedom; to both the Almighty and to His instruments in the work, we look with grateful reverence; and to maintain the inheritance of freedom which they have left us, should it ever—which God forbid—be imperilled, our Catholic citizens will be found to stand forward, as one man ready to pledge anew "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor."

No less illogical would be the notion, that there is aught in the free spirit of our American institutions, incompatible with perfect docility to the Church of Christ. The spirit of American freedom is not one of anarchy or license. It essentially involves love of order, respect for rightful authority, and obedience to just laws. There is nothing in the character of the most liberty-loving American, which could hinder his reverential submission to the Divine authority of Our Lord, or to the like authority delegated by Him to His Apostles and His Church. Nor are there in the world more devoted adherents of the Catholic Church, the See of Peter, and the Vicar of Christ, than the Catholics of the United States. Narrow, insular, national views and jealousies concerning ecclesiastical authority and Church organization, may have sprung naturally enough from the selfish policy of certain rulers and nations in by-gone times; but they find no sympathy in the spirit of the true American Catholic. His natural instincts, no less than his religious training, would forbid him to submit in matters of faith to the dictation of the State or to any merely human authority whatsoever. He accepts the religion and the Church that are from God, and he knows well that these are universal, not national or local,—for all the children of men, not for any special tribe or tongue. We glory that we are, and, with God's blessing, shall continue to be, not the American Church, nor the Church of the United States, nor a Church in any other sense exclusive or limited, but an integral part of the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, which is the Body of Christ, in which there is no distinction of classes and nationalities,—in which all are one in Christ Jesus.²

¹ Rom., xiii, 1.

² Gal., iii, 28.

While the assaults of calumny and persecution directed against the Church since the Vatican Council have abundantly shown how angry the powers of evil have been at the Council's luminous utterances of Divine truth, our Holy Father the Pope has been, naturally enough, the main object of attack. And Divine Providence has been pleased to leave him, for a while at the mercy of his enemies, in order that their impious violence might work out the demonstration of its own injustice; that the true character and the indestructibility of the office of St. Peter might be made manifest to the world; that the wisdom of the Providence which has guarded the independence of that office in the past, might be vindicated and reaffirmed for the future. The great and beloved Pius IX died the "Prisoner of the Vatican," and Leo XIII has inherited his Apostolic trials, together with his Apostolic office. Day after day he has seen the consecrated patrimony of religion and charity swept into Cæsar's coffers by the ruthless hand of spoliation and confiscation. At this moment, he sees that same grasp laid upon the property of the Propaganda, piously set apart for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the missionary countries of the world. So utterly unjustifiable an act has called forth a cry of indignant protest from the Catholics of all countries, and from no country has the cry gone forth clearer and louder than from our own. We thank our government for the action that saved the American College from confiscation; and we hope that the protest and appeal of all governments and peoples that "love justice and hate iniquity" may yet shame the spoiler into honesty. Meanwhile the hearts of all Catholics go out all the more lovingly towards their persecuted Chief Pastor; and from their worldly means, be they abundant or scanty, they gladly supply him with the means necessary for carrying on the administration of his high office. Such has been your liberality in the past, beloved brethren, that we hardly need exhort you to generosity in the collection for the Holy Father, which will continue to be made annually throughout all the dioceses of the country. Let your devoted affection be shown by your deeds, and the persistency of injustice be more than matched by the constancy of your faithful and generous love.

While enduring with the heroism of a martyr the trials which beset him, and trustfully awaiting the Almighty's day of deliverance, the energy and wisdom of Leo XIII are felt to the ends of the earth. He is carrying on with the governments of Europe the negotiations which promise soon to bring peace to the Church. In the East he is preparing the way for the return to Catholic unity of the millions whom the Greek schism has so long deprived of communion with the See of Peter, and is following

the progress of exploration in lands hitherto unknown or inaccessible with corresponding advances of Catholic missions. To the whole world his voice has again and again been gone forth in counsels of eloquence and wisdom, pointing out the path to the acquisition of truth in the important domain of philosophy and history—the best means for the improvement of human life in all its phases, individual, domestic and social—the ways in which the children of God should walk—"that all flesh may see the salvation of God."

But in all the wide circle of his great responsibility, the progress of the Church in these United States forms, in a special manner, both a source of joy and an object of solicitude to the Holy Father. With loving care his predecessors watched and encouraged her first feeble beginnings. They cheered and fostered her development in the pure atmosphere of freedom, when the name of Carroll shone with equal lustre at the head of her new-born Hierarchy, and on the roll of our country's patriots. Step by step they directed her progress, as with marvellous rapidity, the clergy and the dioceses have multiplied; the hundreds of the faithful have increased to thousands and to millions; her churches, schools, asylums, hospitals, academies and colleges, have covered the land with homes of divine truth and Christian charity. Not yet a century has elapsed since the work was inaugurated by the appointment of the first Bishop of Baltimore, in 1789; and as we gaze upon the results already reached we must exclaim: "By the Lord hath this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes."¹

In all this astonishing development, from the rude beginnings of pioneer missionary toil, along the nearer and nearer approaches to the beauteous symmetry of the Church's perfect organization, the advance so gradual yet so rapid has been safely guided in the lines of Catholic and Apostolic tradition, by the combined efforts and wisdom of our local Hierarchy and of the successors of St. Peter. It was in order to take counsel with the representatives of the American Hierarchy concerning the important interests of religion in this country, that the Holy Father, last year, invited the Archbishops of the United States to Rome. And the object of the present council is to put into practical shape the means of religious improvement then resolved upon or suggested.

EDUCATION OF THE CLERGY.

One of our first cares has been to provide for the more perfect education of aspirants to the holy Priesthood. It has always been the Church's endeavor that her clergy should be eminent in learning. For she has



¹ Matt., xxi, 42; Ps., cxvii, 22.

always considered that nothing less than this is required by their sacred office of guarding and dispensing Divine truth. : "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge," says the Most High, "and the people shall seek the law at his mouth." This is true in all times; for no advance in secular knowledge, no diffusion of popular education, can do away with the office of the teaching ministry, which Our Lord has declared shall last forever. In every age it is and shall be the duty of God's priests to proclaim the salutary truths which our Heavenly Father has given to the world through His Divine Son; to present them to each generation in the way that will move their minds and hearts to embrace and love them; to defend them, when necessary, against every attack of error. From this it is obvious that the priest should have a wide acquaintance with every department of learning that has a bearing on religious truth. Hence in our age, when so many misleading theories are put forth on every side, when every department of natural truth and fact is actively explored for objections against revealed religion, it is evident how extensive and thorough should be the knowledge of the minister of the Divine Word, that he may be able to show forth worthily the beauty, the superiority, the necessity of the Christian religion, and to prove that there is nothing in all that God has made to contradict anything that God has taught.

Hence the priest who has the noble ambition of attaining to the high level of his holy office, may well consider himself a student all his life; and of the leisure hours which he can find amid the duties of his ministry, he will have very few that he can spare for miscellaneous reading, and none at all to waste. And hence, too, the evident duty devolving on us, to see that the course of education in our ecclesiastical colleges and seminaries be as perfect as it can be made. During the century of extraordinary growth now closing, the care of the Church in this country has been to send forth as rapidly as possible holy, zealous, hard-working priests, to supply the needs of the multitudes calling for the ministrations of religion. She has not on that account neglected to prepare them for their divine work by a suitable education, as her numerous and admirable seminaries testify; but the course of study was often more rapid and restricted than she desired. At present our improved circumstances make it practicable both to lengthen and widen the course, and for this the Council has duly provided.

We are confident, beloved brethren, that you feel as deeply interested as ourselves in the accomplishment of these great results. This you have hitherto manifested by the zealous liberality by which you have enabled us to build and support our seminaries; and we are well assured that you will not

be found wanting, should even greater efforts be necessary, to enable us to make the education and usefulness of the clergy as perfect as we desire. In the future, as in the past, look upon your annual contribution to the Seminary fund as one of your most important duties as Catholics, and let your generosity be proportioned to the dignity and sacredness of the object for which you offer it.

And here we remind those among our Catholic people to whom God has been pleased to give wealth, that it is their duty and their privilege to consider themselves the Lord's stewards, in the use of what His Providence has placed in their hands; that they should be foremost in helping on the work of the Church of Christ during life, and make sure to have God among their heirs when they die; and we recommend to them as specially useful the founding of scholarships, either in their diocesan or provincial Seminaries, or in the American College in Rome, or elsewhere, as circumstances may suggest.

PASTORAL RIGHTS.

No small portion of our attention has been bestowed on the framing of such legislation as will best secure the rights and interests of your pastors, and of all ranks of the clergy in this country. It is but natural, beloved brethren, that the first and dearest object of our solicitude should be our venerable clergy. They are our dearest brethren, bound to us by ties more sacred than those of flesh and blood. Our elevation to a higher office only draws them to us more closely, since their happiness and welfare are thereby made the first object of our responsibility, and since upon their devoted labors must mainly depend the welfare of the souls entrusted to our charge. We need not tell you, beloved brethren, how admirably they fulfil their sacred trust. You are witnesses to their lives of toil and sacrifice. And to them we can truly say in the words of St. Paul, "You are our glory and our joy."¹

The rights of the clergy have reference chiefly to their exercising the sacred ministry in their missions, to the fixity of their tenure of office and to the inviolableness of their pastoral authority within proper limits. It is the spirit of the Church that the various grades of authority in her organization should in no wise be in rivalry or conflict, but orderly and harmonious. This she has secured by her wise laws, based upon the experience of centuries, and representing the perfection of Church organization. It is obvious that in countries like our own, where from rudimentary beginnings our organization is only gradually advancing towards perfection, the full application of these laws is impracticable; but in proportion as

¹ I. Thes., ii, 20.

they become practicable, it is our desire, not less than that of the Holy See, that they should go into effect. For we have the fullest confidence in the wisdom with which the Church devised these laws, and we heartily rejoice at every approach towards perfect organization in the portion of the vineyard over which we have jurisdiction. This has been to some degree accomplished by regulations enacted during recent years, and still more by the decrees of the present Council.

But while it is our desire to do all on our part that both justice and affection can prompt, for fully securing all proper rights and privileges to our priests, let us remind you, beloved brethren, that on your conduct must their happiness chiefly depend. A grateful and pious flock is sure to make a happy pastor. But if the people do not respond to their pastor's zeal, if they are cold and ungrateful or disedifying, then indeed is his lot sad and pitiable. Since, therefore, the Priests of God leave all things to devote themselves to your spiritual welfare, show by your affection, by your co-operation with their efforts for your spiritual improvement, and even by your care for their physical comfort, that you appreciate their devotedness and the reciprocal obligation which it imposes. Look upon your priests as your best friends, your truest advisers, your surest guides. If duty sometimes calls upon them to admonish or rebuke you, remember that the reproof is meant for your good, and take it in the spirit in which it is given. And if perchance they have to speak to you oftener than is pleasant about church finances and the demands of charity, understand that it must be at least as disagreeable to them as it is to you; that it is not for themselves, but for the needs of the parish church or school, which are intended for your benefit, or of the parish poor, who are your charge, that they have to plead; and that, while they are to bear in mind the advisability of speaking of money as seldom as possible, you must be mindful to make your generosity equal to the need, and thereby save both your pastors and yourselves the painful necessity of frequent appeals.

And here we deem it proper to say a few words concerning church properties and church debts. The manner of holding the legal title to these properties is different in different places, according to the requirements of local civil laws; but whether the title be held by the bishop, or by boards of diocesan or parish trustees, it always remains true that the properties are held in trust for the Church for the benefit of the people. One generation buys or builds, another generation improves and adorns, and each generation uses and transmits for the use of others yet to come,—bishops and priests having the burden of the administration and being sacredly responsible for its faithful performance.

In the discharge of this duty it often becomes necessary to contract church debts. Where the multiplication of the Catholic population has been so rapid, rapid work had to be done in erecting churches and schools. And if, under such circumstances, pastors had to wait till all the funds were in hand before beginning the work, a generation would be left without necessary spiritual aids, and might be lost to the Church and to God. We fully recognize, beloved brethren, how strictly we are bound to prevent the contraction of debts without real necessity; and this we have endeavored to secure by careful legislation. Still, despite all our efforts, it must inevitably happen that the burden imposed on us by our gigantic task of providing for the spiritual wants of the present and the rising generation will always be heavy, and will weigh upon us all. But the special Providence of God towards our country, which has made the work and the need so great, has never failed hitherto to inspire our people with a zeal equal to the demand. You have rivaled your pastors in the ardor of their desire for the building up of the Church of Christ and the extension of His Kingdom; and we are confident that you will preserve your zeal unto the end, and transmit it undiminished to your descendants. It is our earnest wish that existing debts should be liquidated as soon as possible, in order that the money now consumed in paying interest may be employed in the great improvements still to be made, and especially in helping on the glorious work of Christian education.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

Scarcely, if at all; secondary to the Church's desire for the education of the clergy, is her solicitude for the education of the laity. It is not for themselves, but for the people, that the Church wishes her clergy to be learned, as it is not for themselves only, but for the people that they are priests. Popular education has always been a chief object of the Church's care; in fact, it is not too much to say that the history of civilization and education is the history of the Church's work. In the rude ages, when semi-barbarous chieftains boasted of their illiteracy, she succeeded in diffusing that love of learning which covered Europe with schools and universities; and thus from the barbarous tribes of the early middle ages, she built up the civilized nations of modern times. Even subsequent to the religious dissensions of the sixteenth century, whatever progress has been made in education is mainly due to the impetus which she had previously given. In our own country notwithstanding the many difficulties attendant on first beginnings and unexampled growth, we already find her schools, academies and colleges everywhere,

built and sustained by voluntary contributions, even at the cost of great sacrifices, and comparing favorably with the best educational institutions in the land.

These facts abundantly attest the Church's desire for popular instruction. The beauty of truth, the refining and elevating influences of knowledge, are meant for all, and she wishes them to be brought within the reach of all. Knowledge enlarges our capacity both for self-improvement and for promoting the welfare of our fellow-men; and in so noble a work the Church wishes every hand to be busy. Knowledge, too, is the best weapon against pernicious errors. It is only "a little learning" that is "a dangerous thing." In days like ours, when error is so pretentious and aggressive, every one needs to be as completely armed as possible with sound knowledge,—not only the clergy, but the people also that they may be able to withstand the noxious influences of popularized irreligion. In the great coming combat between truth and error, between Faith and Agnosticism, an important part of the fray must be borne by the laity, and woe to them if they are not well prepared. And if, in the olden days of vassalage and serfdom, the Church honored every individual, no matter how humble his position, and labored to give him the enlightenment that would qualify him for future responsibilities, much more now, in the era of popular rights and liberties, when every individual is an active and influential factor in the body politic, does she desire that all should be fitted by suitable training for an intelligent and conscientious discharge of the important duties that will devolve upon them.

Few, if any, will deny that a sound civilization must depend upon sound popular education. But education, in order to be sound and to produce beneficial results, must develop what is best in man, and make him not only clever but good. A one-sided education will develop a one-sided life; and such a life will surely topple over, and so will every social system that is built up of such lives. True civilization requires that not only the physical and intellectual, but also the moral and religious, well-being of the people should be promoted, and at least with equal care. Take away religion from a people, and morality would soon follow; morality gone, even their physical condition will ere long degenerate into corruption which breeds decrepitude, while their intellectual attainments would only serve as a light to guide them to deeper depths of vice and ruin. This has been so often demonstrated in the history of the past, and is, in fact, so self-evident, that one is amazed to find any difference of opinion about it. A civilization without religion, would be a civilization of "the struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest," in

which cunning and strength would become the substitutes for principle, virtue, conscience and duty. As a matter of fact, there never has been a civilization worthy of the name without religion; and from the facts of history the laws of human nature can easily be inferred.

Hence education, in order to foster civilization, must foster religion. Now the three great educational agencies are the home, the Church, and the school. These mould men and shape society. Therefore each of them, to do its part well, must foster religion. But many, unfortunately, while avowing that religion should be the light and the atmosphere of the home and of the Church, are content to see it excluded from the school, and even advocate as the best school system that which necessarily excludes religion. Few surely will deny that childhood and youth are the periods of life when the character ought especially to be subjected to religious influences. Nor can we ignore the palpable fact that the school is an important factor in the forming of childhood and youth,—so important that its influence often outweighs that of home and Church. It cannot, therefore, be desirable or advantageous that religion should be excluded from the school. On the contrary, it ought there to be one of the chief agencies for moulding the young life to all that is true and virtuous, and holy. To shut religion out of the school, and keep it for home and the Church, is, logically, to train up a generation that will consider religion good for home and the Church, but not for the practical business of real life. But a more false and pernicious notion could not be imagined. Religion, in order to elevate a people, should inspire their whole life and rule their relations with one another. A life is not dwarfed, but ennobled by being lived in the presence of God. Therefore the school, which principally gives the knowledge fitting for practical life, ought to be pre-eminently under the holy influence of religion. From the shelter of home and school, the youth must soon go out into the busy ways of trade or traffic or professional practice. In all these, the principles of religion should animate and direct him. But he cannot expect to learn these principles in the work-shop or the office or the counting-room. Therefore let him be well and thoroughly imbued with them by the joint influences of home and school, before he is launched out on the dangerous sea of life.

All denominations of Christians are now awaking to this great truth, which the Catholic Church has never ceased to maintain. Reason and experience are forcing them to recognize that the only practical way to secure a Christian people, is to give the youth a Christian education. The avowed enemies of Christianity in some European countries are banishing religion from the schools, in order gradually to eliminate it from among

the people. In this they are logical, and we may well profit by the lesson. Hence the cry for Christian education is going up from all religious bodies throughout the land. And this is no narrowness and "sectarianism" on their part; it is an honest and logical endeavor to preserve Christian truth and morality among the people by fostering religion in the young. Nor is it any antagonism to the State; on the contrary, it is an honest endeavor to give to the State better citizens, by making them better Christians. The friends of Christian education do not condemn the State for not imparting religious instruction in the public schools as they are now organized; because they well know it does not lie within the provinces of the State to teach religion. They simply follow their conscience by sending their children to denominational schools, where religion can have its rightful place and influence.

Two objects therefore, dear brethren, we have in view, to multiply our schools, and to perfect them. We must multiply them, till every Catholic child in the land shall have within its reach the means of education. There is still much to do ere this be attained. There are still thousands of Catholic children in the United States deprived of the benefit of a Catholic school. Pastors and parents should not rest till this defect be remedied. No parish is complete till it has schools adequate to the needs of its children, and the pastor and people of such a parish should feel that they have not accomplished their entire duty until the want is supplied.

But then, we must also perfect our schools. We repudiate the idea that the Catholic school need be in any respect inferior to any other school whatsoever. And if hitherto, in some places, our people have acted on the principle that it is better to have an imperfect Catholic school than to have none, let them now push their praiseworthy ambition still further, and not relax their efforts till their schools be elevated to the highest educational excellence. And we implore parents not to hasten to take their children from school, but to give them all the time and all the advantages that they have the capacity to profit by, so that, in after life, their children may "rise up and call them blessed."

THE CHRISTIAN HOME.

We need hardly remind you, beloved brethren, that while home life would not, as a rule, be sufficient to supply the absence of good or counteract the evil of dangerous influences in the school, it is equally true, that all that the Christian school could accomplish would be inadequate without the co-operation of the Christian home. Christian schools sow the seed, but Christian homes must first prepare the soil, and afterwards foster the seed and bring it to maturity.

1. *Christian Marriage.*—The basis of the Christian home is Christian marriage; that is, marriage entered into according to religion, and cemented by God's blessing. So great is the importance of marriage to the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind, that, as it had God for its Founder in the Old Law, so, in the New Law, it was raised by Our Divine Lord to the dignity of a sacrament of the Christian religion. Natural likings and instincts have their own value and weight; but they ought not by themselves be a decisive motive in so important a step as Christian marriage; nor are they a safe guarantee for the proper fulfillment of the high ends for which marriage was ordained. That Christian hearts and lives may be wisely and rightly joined, God must join them, and religion sanctify the union; and though the Church sometimes permits the contraction of mixed marriages, she never does so without regret and without a feeling of anxiety for the future happiness of that union and for the eternal salvation of its offspring.

2. *The Indissolubility of Marriage.*—The security of the Christian home is in the indissolubility of the marriage tie. Christian marriage, once consummated, can never be dissolved save by death. Let it be well understood that even adultery, though it may justify "separation from bed and board," cannot loose the marriage tie, so that either of the parties may marry again during the life of the other. Nor has "legal divorce" the slightest power, before God, to loose the bond of marriage and to make a subsequent marriage valid. "Whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."¹ In common with all Christian believers and friends of civilization, we deplore the havoc wrought by the divorce-laws of our country. These laws are fast loosening the foundations of society. Let Catholics, at least remember that such divorces are powerless in conscience. Let them enter into marriage only through worthy and holy motives, and with the blessings of religion, especially with the blessing of the Nuptial Mass. And then, far from wishing for means of escape from their union, they will rejoice that it cannot be divided but by death.

3. *Home Virtues.*—The pervading atmosphere of the Christian home should be Christian charity—the love of God and of the neighbor. It should be the ambition and study of Christian parents to make their home a sanctuary, in which no harsh or angry, no indelicate or profane word, should be uttered,—in which truth, unselfishness, self-control, should be carefully cultivated, in which the thought of God, the desire to please God, should be, sweetly and naturally, held before the children as their habitual motives. From the home sanctuary, the incense of prayer should ascend as a most sweet morning and evening sacrifice to the Lord.

¹ Matt., xix, 6.

How beautiful and rich in blessings is the assembling of parents and children for morning and evening prayer! Our hearts are filled with consolation when, in the course of our pastoral visits, we meet families in which this holy practice is faithfully observed. In such families, we are sure to find proofs of the special benedictions of heaven. Faith, religion and virtue are there fostered to luxuriant growth, and final perseverance almost assured. We earnestly exhort all parents to this salutary custom. And if it be not always feasible in the morning, at least every evening, at a fixed hour, let the entire family be assembled for night prayers, followed by a short reading from the Holy Scriptures, the Following of Christ, or some other pious book.

4. *Good Reading.*—Let the adornments of home be chaste and holy pictures, and, still more, sound, interesting, and profitable books. No indelicate representation should ever be tolerated in a Christian home. Artistic merit in the work is no excuse for the danger thus presented. No child ought to be subjected to temptation by its own parents and in its own home. But let the walls be beautified with what will keep the inmates in mind of our Divine Lord, and of his saints, and with such other pictures of the great and the good as will be incentives to civic and religious virtue.

The same remark applies equally to books and periodicals. Not only should the immoral, the vulgar, the sensational novel, the indecently illustrated newspaper, and publications tending to weaken faith in the religion and the Church of Jesus Christ, be absolutely excluded from every Christian home, but the dangerously exciting and morbidly emotional, whatever, in a word, is calculated to impair or lower the tone of faith or morals in the youthful mind and heart, should be carefully banished. Parents would be sure to warn and withhold their children from anything that would poison or sicken their bodies; let them be at least as watchful against intellectual and moral poison. But let the family book-shelves be well supplied with what is both pleasant and wholesome. Happily, the store of Catholic literature, as well as works which, though not written by Catholics nor treating of religion, are pure, instructive and elevating, is now so large that there can be no excuse for running risk or wasting one's time with what is inferior, tainted, or suspicious. Remember, Christian parents, that the development of the youthful character is intimately connected with the development of the taste for reading. To books as well as to associations may be applied the wise saying: "Show me your company and I will tell you what you are." See, then, that none but good books and newspapers,

as well as none but good companions, be admitted to your homes. Train your children to a love of history and biography. Inspire them with the ambition to become so well acquainted with the history and doctrines of the Church as to be able to give an intelligent answer to any honest inquiry. Should their surroundings call for it, encourage them, as they grow older, to acquire such knowledge of popularly mooted questions of a scientific or philosophical character as will suffice to make them firm in their faith and proof against sophistry. We should be glad to see thoroughly solid and popular works on these important subjects, from able Catholic writers, become more numerous. Teach your children to take a special interest in the history of our own country. We consider the establishment of our country's independence, the shaping of its liberties and laws as a work of special Providence, its framers "building wiser than they knew," the Almighty's hand guiding them. And if ever the glorious fabric is subverted or impaired it will be by men forgetful of the sacrifices of the heroes that reared it, the virtues that cemented it, and the principles on which it rests, or ready to sacrifice principle and virtue to the interests of self or party. As we desire therefore that the history of the United States should be carefully taught in all our Catholic schools, and have directed that it be specially dwelt upon in the education of the young ecclesiastical students in our preparatory seminaries; so also we desire that it form a favorite part of the home library and home reading. We must keep firm and solid the liberties of our country by keeping fresh the noble memories of the past, and thus sending forth from our Catholic homes into the arena of public life not partisans but patriots.

5. *The Holy Scriptures.*—But it can hardly be necessary for us to remind you, beloved brethren, that the most highly valued treasure of every family library, and the most frequently and lovingly made use of, should be the Holy Scriptures. Doubtless you have often read A'Kempis's burning thanksgiving to our Lord for having bestowed on us not only the adorable treasure of His Body in the Holy Eucharist, but also that of the Holy Scriptures, "the Holy Books, for the comfort and direction of our life."¹ And you have before your eyes, prefixed to the Douay version of the Holy Bible, the exhortation of Pope Pius the Sixth in his letter to the Archbishop of Florence, that "the faithful should be moved to the reading of the Holy Scriptures; for these," he says, "are most abundant sources which ought to be left open to every one to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times." And St. Paul declares that "what things soever were written, were written for our learning; that through

¹ Fol. of Christ, B. 4, c. 11.

patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.”¹ We hope that no family can be found amongst us without a correct version of the Holy Scriptures. Among other versions, we recommend the Douay, which is venerable as used by our forefathers for three centuries, which comes down to us sanctioned by innumerable authorizations, and which was suitably annotated by the learned Bishop Challoner, by Canon Haydock, and especially by the late Archbishop Kenrick.

But in your reading remember the admonition of A’Kempis: “The Holy Scriptures must be read in the same spirit in which they were written; if thou wilt derive profit, read with humility, simplicity and faith.”² And keep ever before your mind the principle laid down by St. Peter in the first chapter of his second Epistle: “Understanding this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation, for prophecy came not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost.” And this other given by St. John, in the fourth chapter of his first Epistle, in the name of the Apostolic teaching Church: “Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not; by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” In these two divinely inspired rules you have always a sure safe-guard against the danger of error.

6. *The Catholic Press.*—Finally, Christian parents, let us beg your earnest consideration of this important truth, that upon you, singly and individually, must practically depend the solution of the question, whether or not the Catholic press is to accomplish the great work which Providence and the Church expect of it at this time. So frequently and so forcibly has the providential mission of the press been dwelt upon by Popes and prelates and distinguished Catholic writers, and so assiduously have their utterances been quoted and requoted everywhere, that no one certainly stands in need of arguments to be convinced of this truth. But all this will be only words in the air, unless it can be brought home to each parent and made practical in each household. If the head of each Catholic family will recognize it as his privilege and his duty to contribute towards supporting the Catholic press, by subscribing for one or more Catholic periodicals, and keeping himself well acquainted with the information they impart, then the Catholic press will be sure to attain to its rightful development and to accomplish its destined mission. But choose a journal that is thoroughly Catholic, instructive and edifying; not one that would be, while Catholic in name or pretence, uncatholic in tone

¹ Rom. xv.² E. 1, c. v.

and spirit, disrespectful to constituted authority, or biting and uncharitable to Catholic brethren.

Beloved brethren, a great social revolution is sweeping over the world. Its purpose, hidden or avowed, is to dethrone Christ and religion. The ripples of the movement have been observed in our country; God grant that its tidal wave may not break over us. Upon you, Christian parents, it mainly depends whether it shall or not; for, such as our homes are, such shall our people be. We beseech you, therefore, to ponder carefully all that we have said concerning the various constituents of a true Christian home, and, to the utmost of your ability, to carry them into effect. And we entreat all pastors of souls to bear unceasingly in mind, that upon the Christian school and the Christian homes in their parishes must mainly depend the fruit of their priestly labors. Let them concentrate their efforts on these two points,—to make the schools and the homes what they ought to be;—then indeed will they carry to the Lord of the harvest full and ripe sheaves, and the future generation will bless them for transmitting unimpaired the priceless gifts of faith and religion.

THE LORD'S DAY.

There are many sad facts in the experience of nations, which we may well store up as lessons of practical wisdom. Not the least important of these is the fact that one of the surest marks and measures of the decay of religion in a people, is their non-observance of the Lord's Day. In traveling through some European countries, a Christian's heart is pained by the almost unabated rush of toil and traffic on Sunday. First, grasping avarice thought it could not afford to spare the day to God; then unwise governments, yielding to the pressure of mammon, relaxed the laws which for many centuries had guarded the day's sacredness,—forgetting that there are certain fundamental principles, which ought not to be sacrificed to popular caprice or greed. And when, as usually happens, neglect of religion had passed, by lapse of time, into hostility to religion, this growing neglect of the Lord's Day was easily made use of as a means to bring religion itself into contempt. The Church mourned, protested, struggled, but was almost powerless to resist the combined forces of popular avarice and Cæsar's influence, arrayed on the side of irreligion. The result is the lamentable desecration which all Christians must deplore.

And the consequences of this desecration are as manifest as the desecration itself. The Lord's Day is the poor man's day of rest; it has been taken from him,—and the laboring classes are a seething volcano of social discontent. The Lord's Day is the home day, drawing closer the sweet

domestic ties, by giving the toiler a day with wife and children; but it has been turned into a day of labor,—and home ties are fast losing their sweetness and their hold. The Lord's Day is the church-day, strengthening and consecrating the bond of brotherhood among all men, by their kneeling together around the altars of the one Father in heaven; but men are drawn away from this blessed communion of Saints,—and as a natural consequence they are lured into the counterfeit communion of Socialism, and other wild and destructive systems. The Lord's Day is God's Day, rendering ever nearer and more intimate the union between the creature and his Creator, and thus ennobling human life in all its relations; and where this bond is weakened, an effort is made to cut man loose from God entirely, and to leave him, according to the expression of St. Paul, "without God in this world."¹ The profanation of the Lord's Day, whatever be its pretext, is a defrauding both of God and His creatures, and retribution is not slow.

In this country, there are tendencies and influences at work to bring about a similar result; and it behooves all who love God and care for society, to see that they be checked. As usual, greed for gain lies at the bottom of the movement. Even when the pretence put forward is popular convenience or popular amusement, the clamor for larger liberty does not come so much from those who desire the convenience or the amusement, as from those who hope to enrich themselves by supplying it. Now far be it from us to advocate such Sunday-laws as would hinder necessary work, or prohibit such popular enjoyments as are consistent with the sacredness of the day. It is well known, however, that the tendency is to rush far beyond the bounds of necessity and propriety, and to allege these reasons only as an excuse for virtually ignoring the sacredness of the day altogether. But no community can afford to have either gain or amusement at such a cost. To turn the Lord's Day into a day of toil, is a blighting curse to a country; to turn it into a day of dissipation would be worse. We earnestly appeal, therefore, to all Catholics without distinction, not only to take no part in any movement tending toward a relaxation of the observance of Sunday, but to use their influence and power as citizens to resist in the opposite direction.

There is one way of profaning the Lord's Day which is so prolific of evil results, that we consider it our duty to utter against it a special condemnation. This is the practice of selling beer or other liquors on Sunday, or of frequenting places where they are sold. This practice tends more than any other to turn the Day of the Lord into a day of dissipation, to use it as an occasion for breeding intemperance. While we hope

Ephes., ii, 12,

that Sunday-laws on this point will not be relaxed, but even more rigidly enforced, we implore all Catholics, for the love of God and of country, never to take part in such Sunday traffic, nor to patronize or countenance it. And we not only direct the attention of all pastors to the repression of this abuse, but we also call upon them to induce all of their flocks that may be engaged in the sale of liquors to abandon as soon as they can the dangerous traffic, and to embrace a more becoming way of making a living.

And here it behooves us to remind our workmen, the bone and sinew of the people and the specially beloved children of the Church, that if they wish to observe Sunday as they ought, they must keep away from drinking places on Saturday night. Carry your wages home, to your families, where they rightfully belong. Turn a deaf ear, therefore, to every temptation; and then Sunday will be a bright day for all the family. How much better this than to make it a day of sin for yourselves, and of gloom and wretchedness for your homes, by a Saturday night's folly or debauch. No wonder that the Prelates of the Second Plenary Council declared that "the most shocking scandals which we have to deplore spring from intemperance." No wonder that they gave a special approval to the zeal of those who, the better to avoid excess, or in order to give bright example, pledge themselves to total abstinence. Like them we invoke a blessing on the cause of temperance, and on all who are laboring for its advancement in a true Christian spirit. Let the exertions of our Catholic Temperance Societies meet with the hearty co-operation of pastors and people; and not only will they go far towards strangling the monstrous evil of intemperance, but they will also put a powerful check on the desecration of the Lord's Day, and on the evil influences now striving for its total profanation.

Let all our people "remember to keep holy the Lord's Day." Let them make it not only a day of rest, but also a day of prayer. Let them sanctify it by assisting at the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass. Besides the privilege of the morning Mass, let them also give their souls the sweet enjoyment of the Vesper service and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. See that the children not only hear Mass, but also attend the Sunday-school. It will help them to grow up more practical Catholics. In country places, and especially in those which the priest cannot visit every Sunday, the Sunday-school ought to be the favorite place of reunion for young and old. It will keep them from going astray, and will strengthen them in the faith. How many children have been lost to the Church in country districts, because parents neglected to see that they observed the Sunday properly at home and at Sunday-school, and allowed them to fall under dangerous influences!

FORBIDDEN SOCIETIES.

One of the most striking characteristics of our times is the universal tendency to band together in societies for the promotion of all sorts of purposes. This tendency is the natural outgrowth of an age of popular rights and representative institutions. It is also in accordance with the spirit of the Church, whose aim, as indicated by her name Catholic, is to unite all mankind in brotherhood. It is consonant also with the spirit of Christ, who came to break down all walls of division, and to gather all in the one family of the one heavenly Father.

But there are few good things which have not their counterfeits, and few tendencies which have not their dangers. It is obvious to any reflecting mind that men form bad and rash as well as good and wise designs; and that they may band together for carrying out evil or dangerous as well as laudable and useful purposes. And this does not necessarily imply deliberate malice, because, while it is unquestionably true that there are powers at work in the world which deliberately antagonize the cause of Christian truth and virtue, still the evil or the danger of purposes and associations need not always spring from so bad a root. Honest but weak and erring human nature is apt to be so taken up with one side of a question as to do injustice to the other; to be so enamored of favorite principles as to carry them to unjustifiable extremes; to be so intent upon securing some laudable end as to ignore the rules of prudence, and bring about ruin instead of restoration. But no intention, no matter how honest, can make lawful what is unlawful. For it is a fundamental rule of Christian morals that "evil must not be done that good may come of it," and "the end can never justify the means," if the means are evil. Hence it is the evident duty of every reasonable man, before allowing himself to be drawn into any society, to make sure that both its ends and its means are consistent with truth, justice and conscience.

In making such a decision, every Catholic ought to be convinced that his surest guide is the Church of Christ. She has in her custody the sacred deposit of Christian truth and morals; she has the experience of all ages and all nations; she has at heart the true welfare of mankind; she has the perpetual guidance of the Holy Ghost in her authoritative decisions. In her teaching and her warnings therefore, we are sure to hear the voice of wisdom, prudence, justice and charity. From the hill-top of her Divine mission and her world-wide experience, she sees events and their consequences far more clearly than they who are down in the tangled plain of daily life. She has seen associations that were once praiseworthy, become pernicious by change of circumstances. She has seen

others, which won the admiration of the world by their early achievements, corrupted by power or passion or evil guidance, and she has been forced to condemn them. She has beheld associations which had their origin in the spirit of the Ages of Faith, transformed by lapse of time, and loss of faith, and the manipulation of designing leaders, into the open or hidden enemies of religion and human weal. Thus our Holy Father Leo XIII has lately shown that the Masonic and kindred societies,—although the offspring of the ancient Guilds, which aimed at sanctifying trades and tradesmen with the blessings of religion; and although retaining, perhaps, in their “ritual,” much that tells of the religiousness of their origin; and although in some countries still professing entire friendliness toward the Christian religion,—have nevertheless already gone so far, in many countries, as to array themselves in avowed hostility against Christianity, and against the Catholic Church as its embodiment; that they virtually aim at substituting a world-wide fraternity of their own, for the universal brotherhood of Jesus Christ, and at disseminating mere Naturalism for the supernatural revealed religion bestowed upon mankind by the Saviour of the world. He has shown, too, that, even in countries where they are as yet far from acknowledging such purposes, they nevertheless have in them the germs, which, under favorable circumstances, would inevitably blossom forth in similar results. The Church, consequently, forbids her children to have any connection with such societies, because they are either an open evil to be shunned or a hidden danger to be avoided. She would fail in her duty if she did not speak the word of warning, and her children would equally fail in theirs, if they did not heed it.

Whenever, therefore, the Church has spoken authoritatively with regard to any society, her decision ought to be final for every Catholic. He ought to know that the Church has not acted hastily or unwisely, or mistakenly; he should be convinced that any worldly advantages which he might derive from his membership of such society, would be a poor substitute for the membership, the sacraments, and the blessings of the Church of Christ; he should have the courage of his religious convictions, and stand firm to faith and conscience. But if he be inclined or asked to join a society on which the Church has passed no sentence, then let him, as a reasonable and Christian man, examine into it carefully, and not join the society until he is satisfied as to its lawful character.

There is one characteristic which is always a strong presumption against a society, and that is secrecy. Our Divine Lord Himself has laid down the rule: “Every one that doth evil, hateth the light and cometh not to the

light, that his works may not be reproved. But he that doth truth cometh to the light that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God."¹ When, therefore, associations veil themselves in secrecy and darkness, the presumption is against them, and it rests with them to prove that there is nothing evil in them.

But if any society's obligation be such as to bind its members to secrecy, even when rightly questioned by competent authority, then such a society puts itself outside the limits of approval; and no one can be a member of it and at the same time be admitted to the sacraments of the Catholic Church. The same is true of any organization that binds its members to a promise of blind obedience—to accept in advance and to obey whatsoever orders, lawful or unlawful, that may emanate from its chief authorities; because such a promise is contrary both to reason and conscience. And if a society works or plots, either openly or in secret, against the Church, or against lawful authorities, then to be a member of it is to be excluded from the membership of the Catholic Church.

These authoritative rules, therefore, ought to be the guide of all Catholics in their relations with societies. No Catholic can conscientiously join, or continue in, a body in which he knows that any of these condemned features exist. If he has joined it in good faith and the objectionable features become known to him afterwards, or if any of these evil elements creep into a society which was originally good, it becomes his duty to leave it at once. And even if he were to suffer loss or run risk by leaving such a society or refusing to join it, he should do his duty and brave the consequences regardless of human considerations.

To these laws of the Church, the justice of which must be manifest to all impartial minds, we deem it necessary to add the following admonition of the Second Plenary Council:² "Care must be taken lest workingmen's societies, under the pretext of mutual assistance and protection, should commit any of the evils of condemned societies; and lest the members should be induced by the artifices of designing men to break the laws of justice, by withholding labor to which they are rightfully bound, or by otherwise unlawfully violating the rights of their employers."

But while the Church is thus careful to guard her children against whatever is contrary to Christian duty, she is no less careful that no injustice should be done to any association, however unintentionally. While therefore the Church, before prohibiting any society, will take every precaution to ascertain its true nature, we positively forbid any pastor, or other ecclesiastic, to pass sentence on any association, or to impose eccle-

¹ John, iii, 20, 21.

² No. 519.

siastical penalties or disabilities on its members without the previous explicit authorization of the rightful authorities.

CATHOLIC SOCIETIES.

It is not enough for Catholics to shun bad or dangerous societies, they ought to take part in good and useful ones. If there ever was a time when merely negative goodness would not suffice, such assuredly is the age in which we live. This is pre-eminently an age of action, and what we need to-day is active virtue and energetic piety. Again and again has the voice of the Vicar of Christ been heard, giving approval and encouragement to many kinds of Catholic associations, not only as a safeguard against the allurements of dangerous societies, but also as a powerful means of accomplishing much of the good that our times stand in need of. Not only should the pastors of the Church be hard at work in building up "the spiritual house,"¹ "the tabernacle of God with men,"² but every hand among the people of God should share in the labor.

In the first place, we hope that in every parish in the land there is some sodality or confraternity to foster piety among the people. We therefore heartily endorse anew all approbations previously given to our many time-honored and cherished confraternities, such as those of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of the Blessed Sacrament, and of the Blessed Virgin.

Next come the various associations for works of Christian zeal and charity: the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and the Holy Childhood, than which there are none more deserving; societies for the support of Catholic education; Christian doctrine societies for the work of Sunday-schools; societies for improving the condition of the poor, among which stands pre-eminent the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; church-debt societies; societies for supplying poor churches with vestments and other altar requirements; local sanctuary societies; and other methods of uniting the efforts of the people of the parish for useful and holy purposes. It ought to be the comfort and the honest pride of every Catholic to take an active part in these good works; and if any are hindered from contributing a portion of their time and labor, they should contribute as liberally as they can out of their pecuniary resources.

Then there are associations for the checking of immorality, prominent among which are our Catholic Temperance Societies. These should be encouraged and aided by all who deplore the scandal given and the spiritual ruin wrought by intemperance. It is a mistake to imagine that such societies are made up of the reformed victims of intemperance. They should be, and we trust that they everywhere are largely composed of zealous

¹ I. Pet., ii, 5.

² Apoc., xxi, 3

Catholics who never were tainted by that vice, but who mourn over the great evil and are energetically endeavoring to correct it.

We likewise consider as worthy of particular encouragement associations for the promotion of healthful social union among Catholics,—and especially those, whose aim is to guard our Catholic young men against dangerous influences, and to supply them with the means of innocent amusement and mental culture. It is obvious that our young men are exposed to the greatest dangers, and therefore need the most abundant helps. Hence, in the spirit of our Holy Father Leo XIII, we desire to see the number of thoroughly Catholic and well organized associations for their benefit greatly increased, especially in our large cities; we exhort pastors to consider the formation and careful direction of such societies as one of their most important duties; and we appeal to our young men to put to good profit, the best years of their lives, by banding together, under the direction of their pastors, for mutual improvement and encouragement in the paths of faith and virtue.

And in order to acknowledge the great amount of good that the "Catholic Young Men's National Union" has already accomplished, to promote the growth of the Union and to stimulate its members to greater efforts in the future, we cordially bless their aims and endeavors and recommend the Union to all our Catholic young men.

We also esteem as a very important element in practical Catholicity, the various forms of Catholic beneficial societies and kindred associations of Catholic workingmen. It ought to be, and we trust is everywhere their aim to encourage habits of industry, thrift, and sobriety; to guard the members against the dangerous attractions of condemned or suspicious organizations; and to secure the faithful practice of their religious duties, on which their temporal as well as their eternal welfare so largely depends.

With paternal affection we bestow our blessing upon all those various forms of combined Catholic action for useful and holy purposes. We desire to see their number multiplied and their organization perfected. We beseech them to remember that their success and usefulness must rest in a great measure, upon their fidelity to the spirit of the Church, and on their guarding carefully against influences that might make them disloyal. The more closely pastors and people are united in good works, the more abundantly will those associations be blessed and their ends accomplished, the more perfectly will all Christians be united in fraternal charity, and the more widely and firmly will the Kingdom of Christ on the earth be established.

HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIO.

The duties of a Christian begin with his own household and his own parish; but they do not end there. The charity and zeal in his heart must be like that in the heart of the Church, whose very name is Catholic,—like that in the heart of Christ, who “died for all men, and gave Himself a redemption for all.”¹ The Divine commission to the Church stands forever: “Go, teach all nations; preach the Gospel to every creature;”² and every one who desires the salvation of souls, should yearn for its fulfillment, and consider it a privilege to take part in its realization. The more we appreciate the gift of faith, the more must we long to have it imparted to others. The heart of every true Catholic must glow as he reads of the heroic labors of our missionaries among heathen nations in every part of the world, and especially among the Indian tribes of our country. The missionary spirit is one of the glories of the Church and one of the chief characteristics of Christian zeal.

In nearly all European countries there are Foreign Mission Colleges, and also associations of the faithful for the support of the missions by their contributions. Hitherto we have had to strain every nerve in order to carry on the missions of our own country, and we were unable to take any important part in aiding the missions abroad. But we must beware lest our local burdens should make our zeal narrow and uncatholic. There are hundreds of millions of souls in heathen lands to whom the light of the Gospel has not yet been carried, and their condition appeals to the charity of every Christian heart. Among our own Indian tribes, for whom we have a special responsibility, there are still many thousands in the same darkness of heathenism, and the missions among our thousands of Catholic Indians must equally look to our charity for support. Moreover, out of the six millions of our colored population there is a very large multitude, who stand sorely in need of Christian instruction and missionary labor; and it is evident that in the poor dioceses in which they are mostly found, it is most difficult to bestow on them the care they need, without the generous co-operation of our Catholic people in more prosperous localities. We have therefore urged the establishment of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in every parish in which it is not yet erected, and also ordered a collection to be made yearly in all the dioceses, for the foreign missions and the missions among our Indians and Negroes. We have done this through a deep sense of duty, and we trust that our noble-hearted people will not regard it as a burden imposed on them, but as an opportunity presented to them of co-operating in a work which must be specially dear to the Heart of our Divine Saviour.

¹ II. Cor., v. 15; I. Tim., ii, 6.

² Mat., xxviii, 19; Mark, xvi, 15.

These are the leading matters, venerable and beloved brethren, which have engaged our attention during this Council. The objects of our deliberations have been the same that have occupied the energies of the Church and her pastors ever since the days of the Apostles,—namely, the extension of the kingdom of God, the building up the Body of Christ, the giving greater “glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will,” by shedding abroad more abundantly the blessings of religion, and the graces of redemption. Our legislation is not intended to impose burdens or limitations upon you, but, on the contrary, to enlarge and secure to you “the liberty of the children of God.” The path of duty and virtue is clearly marked and pointed out, not to restrain your freedom, but that you may journey safely, that you may live wisely and virtuously, that you may have happiness temporal and eternal.

And now we write you these things, that you may be partners in our solicitude, that every heart may cry out “Thy Kingdom come,” that every hand may be active in establishing and extending it. Accept with willing and loving minds these lessons which spring from hearts full of love for you, and entirely consecrated to your service. Give joy to us and to our Divine Lord by putting them faithfully in practice. And may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, descend upon you abundantly, and abide with you forever.

Given at Baltimore, in the Plenary Council, on the 7th day of December, in the year of our Lord 1884.

In his own name and in the name of all the Fathers,

✠ JAMES GIBBONS,

Archbishop of Baltimore and Apostolic Delegate.

U. S. N.

7700

BOUND IN LIBRARY.
JUN 25 1902

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



3 9015 07499 3547

